

CITY OF MUSKEGON  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**

**April 4, 2017**

Chairperson J. Hilt called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Hilt, S. Kroes, D. Warren, S. Radtke, L. Wood, K. Panozzo

MEMBERS ABSENT: A. Riegler, excused

STAFF PRESENT: M. Franzak, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: A. Coffee, 1201 Ransom; D. Gregersen, 241 W Muskegon Ave.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 7, 2017 was made by D. Warren, supported by K. Panozzo and unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Case 2017-04 – 1201 Ransom Street.** Applicant: Andre' Coffee. District: McLaughlin. Current Function: Residential. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to build a detached garage. This property is located on a corner lot and the garage would be built on the Delaware Avenue side of the property. The garage would measure 24' x 36' with a pitched roof and a maximum height of 14.' There would be two garage doors, once facing Delaware St and one facing the house. The side facing the house would also have an entry door. They are proposing vinyl siding that would match the existing vinyl siding on the house as well as the same type of shingles as the house. Also note that staff has discovered that the white vinyl fence on the property was installed last year without a permit or HDC approval. The applicant will propose a new fence to the board since this one is too tall to be in a front yard.

M. Franzak stated that, although there are no windows on the garage, he had looked at other garages in the area and this was not unusual. D. Warren asked Mr. Coffee if he was going to replace the fence in front with another kind. A. Coffee stated that he was not; he would just move the fence back to the corner of the house.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to build a new 24- by 36-foot garage as proposed, and to approve the white vinyl fence as long as it is moved back approximately 20 feet to where the fence ordinance allows, with the conditions that all zoning requirements are met and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by L. Wood, supported by S. Kroes and unanimously approved.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**390 W Muskegon Ave** – Last year, staff inadvertently approved a fence in an historic district without taking it to the board for approval. A neighbor a few blocks away is not happy with the fence and is asking that something be done about it. Unfortunately, the board does not have the

authority to order removal of it at this point, since the permit has been issued; however, staff has contacted the property owner and informed them of the issue. The owner is adamant that the fence is a great addition as it is, and does not want a “cheap chain link fence.” They may be willing to modify the fence, but only to a certain extent. The City has offered to provide money and resources to assist in modifications. The owners were willing to let the HDC make a recommendation for moving forward. They have been a great addition to the neighborhood and have done a great job of cleaning up the yard, which previously had many dead and overgrown trees/shrubs. They will also be finishing the fence this spring and will be landscaping around it. They plan to paint the home this summer and never considered requesting vinyl or making any other changes that would detract from the home’s historical integrity.

M. Franzak stated that the homeowners needed a fence to keep a large dog in the yard. They planned to landscape around the fence also. S. Radtke suggested allowing a one-time exception to allow this fence, since no alterations were made to the house, and the black chain link part of the fence blended in to the landscape. D. Gregersen lived in the area and did not like the fence, as it was not historically appropriate. He requested that the HDC make an official recommendation to the property owner on how to modify the fence design to make it more appropriate. M. Franzak stated that making a recommendation and offering to pay for modifications is about all the City can do at this point. D. Warren asked if the homeowner had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the fence. M. Franzak stated that she had been invited, but could not attend due to work. Board members discussed various styles of fence that would be acceptable. D. Gregersen suggested an aluminum picket fence like the one at Nelson Place. L. Wood pointed out that the landscaping could cover much of the fence. Other modification possibilities included adding finials to the top of the posts and painting or staining the wooden posts. M. Franzak stated that he had a good idea of what the board wanted and would contact the homeowner to relay the information.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Hackley Park dance floor** – After reviewing the Hackley Park Master Plan and discussing the issue with the City’s Parks Supervisor, the applicant was informed that staff would not support the request to add a permanent concrete dance floor to the park. Hackley Park is a Civil War memorial, and the main focus of the park is the central monument and walkways leading to it. The addition of a concrete pad would distract from the symmetrical walkways and monuments. Although staff does not support the request for a permanent dance floor, they have offered to level off the grass near the stage to allow for better usage of a temporary dance floor. The applicant stated that he may still present his proposal to the HDC in May.

**HDC grant program** – M. Franzak and board members again discussed a possible HDC grant program through the City. Over the past month, staff had become more receptive to assisting with home painting, but there needed to be safeguards in place to ensure that quality work was performed so paint wouldn’t be chipping off in a couple of years. M. Franzak asked that board members e-mail their ideas to him before the next HDC meeting so a formal proposal could be presented to the City Manager.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.